

Lyndon Johnson VS The Ghost of Jack Kennedy

by Tom Wicker

Two years ago, November 22nd, the New Frontier ended.

*It is the time of the Great Society now,
and Lyndon Johnson wants you to love only him.*

Should you?

The fact of the matter is that it was not one of the better months of the Kennedy years in Washington—that November of 1963. It was good football weather most of the time, as I recall it, and a lot of things happened that made good copy, but most of us felt we were marking time. We were on the edge of an election year and if there was anyone in town who believed President Kennedy would be defeated, he was brooding in silence, not speaking out. The real question, the deep thinkers said, was whether Kennedy could win a big victory and turn it into the kind of accomplishment he had promised in 1960 but hadn't been able to deliver.

People talked a great deal about Barry Goldwater, who obviously was getting ready to run and who was beginning to be taken as a serious candidate in a town accustomed to thinking of him as pretty far out. Kennedy, however, was doing nothing to build up Goldwater and still was dealing with him lightly.

"Senator Goldwater," he told the A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention in New York, "asked for labor's support before two thousand cheering Illinois businessmen." And at a news conference, he sharpened the needle. He would not criticize the Senator just then, he said, because "he himself has had a busy week selling T.V.A. and . . . suggesting that military commanders overseas be permitted to use nuclear weapons; attacking the President of Bolivia while he was here in the United States, involving himself in the Greek elections. . . . I think it is a shame that he has done this. . . . I wish to say to him."

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